

**Virginia Agricultural BMP Technical Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting 9:30 AM, February 14, 2013**  
**Summary**

**TAC members in attendance:**

Member	Representing	Member	Representing
Megen Dalton	VACDE	Mark Hollberg	DCR CB CDC
Chris Barbour	SR Cons. Tech.	Chad Wentz	NRCS
Stacy Horton	DCR SR CDC	Darryl Marshall	VDACS
Todd Groh	DOF	David Knicely	DEQ
Robert Bradford	Area II Chair (Proxy)	Emily Horsley	FSA
Tim Sexton	DCR Nut. Man.	Ronnie Nuckols	Area III (Proxy)
Ben Rowe	VA Grain Producers (Proxy)	Tom Turner	CB Cons. Tech.

Participants: Sharyl Ogle, NRCS; Emily Nelson, Thomas Jefferson SWCD; Jim Jarvis, R. E. Lee SWCD; Barry Skiles, NRCS; Perry Morgan, Blue Ridge SWCD; Bobby Clark, VCE

The meeting began at 9:30 AM. Gary Moore led and facilitated the discussion that followed. A summary of discussion topics, action items, and significant conclusions are as follows:

Introductions were made around the room and new representatives and participants were welcomed.

The draft summary of the December 13, 2012 TAC meeting was reviewed and approved with no changes noted.

**Old Business**

- ◆ **Resource Management Plans (RMP):** Gary informed the TAC that the presentation of the RMP regulations to the Soil and Water Conservation Board for approval did not occur during the Board's December meeting. DCR is preparing a summary & response for the approximately 120 comments it received during the public hearings. It is anticipated that RMP draft regulations will be presented to the Soil and Water Conservation Board at their March 27, 2013 meeting. A public comment process will occur during that meeting. Board members will receive a board packet 10 days before the official board meeting. If RMP regulations are approved the Board will need to identify an effective date for the regulations to go into effect.
- ◆ **NRCS Updates on Programs:** Chad Wentz provided an update on the progress of 2012 & 2013 NRCS conservation programs.
  - NRCS has preapproved 552 EQIP applications for ~\$14.5 M during the first batching period. All funds from both the energy and forestry pools have been committed. There is a backlog of 335 EQIP applications that will be considered for pre approvals during the next batching period. Signup is ongoing.

- Awaiting national approvals to announce Watershed Initiatives,
- VA NRCS has asked the national office to provide ~\$4 M for CBWI applications
- CSP no signup announced at this time.

◆ **Farm Service Agency (FSA)**

- Existing CRP contracts can be extended but no new contracts can be approved, local offices are taking applications.
- A new website <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/atra>  
Can provide information about the status of FSA programs as impacted by budget negotiations.
- April JED Trainings will focus on CREP

◆ **Nutrient Management Subcommittee Report**

- The nutrient management subcommittee met via teleconference on January 15, 2013 to discuss two different items.
- The NM subcommittee recommends to the TAC that no changes be made to the NM-3B or other existing NM practices for increased PSNT testing unless new sources of money are identified. The Chesapeake Bay Regulatory and Accountability Program (CBRAP) grant might be a source of funds for increasing the use of PSNT.
- The committee recommends that Large Animal Mortality Composting (LAMC) be added to the WP-4C specification. A PowerPoint presentation based upon NRCS designs for LAMC systems in operation in South west VA was presented by Barry Skiles, Sharyl Ogle and Alica Ketchum NRCS engineers. Bobby Clark also showed a video of a method of grinding small bone debris and removal of large bones. This step is necessary before the end product can be spread on crop, pasture or hay land. The acquisition of an “Allu Bucket grinder” to complete this step is outside the capabilities of the Ag BMP program will probably require a regional grant.
- New language needs to be developed that identifies what can and what cannot receive cost-share, composting time based upon weight of carcass, minimum size of composter, type of composter necessary (roofed, open or pre-engineered package facility) and the minimum number of animals managed in operation to receive cost-share funding, and should also be addressed by the new language/revisions:
  - The state veterinarian recommends that the end products from large animal mortality composting not be transferred to another animal operation. It could be spread on hay, crop or pasture land.
  - NRCS has developed an Engineering Design Note (316) for the design of large animal mortality composting facilities. It provides guidance based upon the number and types of animals being composted on the type of composting facility needed, size of facility, facility design and separation distances from other land usages for a LAMC facility.

◆ **Forestry Subcommittee :** Todd Groh presented the forestry subcommittee report as follows:

- FR-1, There was extensive discussion with decisions being reached to:
  - Add “and/or approve” in B 1.
  - Modify B. 3. To include “or suitably durable” and remove italics and parenthesis
  - B. 4. Remove the second sentence (State reforestation and/or federal cost-share funds can be used for replanting.)
  - Modify B. 5. So that the reference is only to CREP not CRP
- FR-3, This practice specification should reflect the structure and wording of the FR-1 with the same modifications outlined above being made to this specification and to modify the rate section to identify different rates for both coniferous and hardwood buffers and 10 and 15 year life spans.

◆ **Cover Crop Subcommittee:**

Megen Dalton, Committee Chair reported that the subcommittee recommended that there be no revisions to either the SL-8B or the SL-8H specifications in regards to the winter oats issue(s) that the committee was asked to review.

◆ **Stream Protection subcommittee:**

No report

◆ **Virginia Enhanced Conservation Initiative (VECI)**

Gary summarized the results of the February 10 second VECI assignment of funds

- The value of the VECI requests for funds was greater than the amount of VECI funds available in both the CB and SR.
- So, all VECI requests were ranked by dividing the amount of VECI funds requested by the product of the equivalent animal units multiplied by the linear feet of stream bank to be protected, and funding those applications with the lowest ranking scores first until as many of the applications were funded as the VECI funds would support. All applications were assigned the full amount of VECI funds requested.
- There were a significant number of VECI applications that did not get funded in both drainage basins.
- Gary is working with Robert Bennett on a reallocation process for unobligated VACS funds that will provide some additional opportunities for districts to fund VACS and VECI practices.

There was a brief discussion about the existing TAC proxy guidance. The proxy must be a peer of the person that they are representing (i.e. Proxy for a Conservation Technician must be a Conservation Technician), for Area District Chairs any other Director from their Area will be considered a peer.

Gary advised that the Matrix of TAC Recommended Changes to 2014 VACS Program had been updated to reflect the proposed changes from the TAC. The group noted that depending on what information was brought forward and approved at the next TAC meeting additional items may be added to the matrix. Specifically, modifications to the WP-4C specification to allow for Large Animal Composting and modifications to the LE-2 specification to allow for various setbacks and payment rates within this practice.

## **AGENCY UPDATES**

### **Dept of Forestry:**

DOF and DGIF have developed a Forestry Quail Habitat Recovery Cost-Share Program to improve existing private timber land. Four practices will be cost-share up to a maximum of

\$10,000 per landowner per fiscal year.

- 1) Herbicide Application to Thinned Pine Stands
- 2) Commercial Thinning in Small Acreage Stands
- 3) Shortleaf Pine Planting
- 4) Pre-Commercial Pine Thinning

DOF and NRCS have developed the Open Lands Initiative/Program with focus areas in the Shenandoah Valley, New River Valley and Chowan Basin areas. This initiative was created to help identify open or semi-open land and develop landowner contact lists that DOF foresters can use to contact landowners and direct them towards existing conservation program opportunities.

Remember that Virginia no burn law in effect between February 15<sup>th</sup> and March 30, 2013. No outdoor burning prior to 4 PM.

#### **Virginia Dept of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)**

Darrell Marshall reported that VDACS and DEQ have partnered to implement a “Small Animal Feeding Operation (AFO) Assessment Strategy”. It is a voluntary water quality assessment of operations that are below the VPA permitting threshold and have animals confined for a minimum of 45 days in a calendar year- either in a structure or on a lot completely void of any vegetation. This would include dairies, many feedlots, and even some equine operations. The strategy focuses on the production area where the animals are confined and fed. Currently DEQ and VDACS staff are in the process of planning meetings to introduce the strategy to VCE, NRCS, and SWCD personnel.

#### **Concerns from the Floor**

None; Meeting adjourned ~ 1:30 PM

**Next meeting date scheduled for March 28, 2013 9:30 AM DOF 1<sup>st</sup> floor training room.**